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DRAFT REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME MATTERS ON ITS IN-SESSIONAL MEETING HELD DURING THE THIRTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL, 4-29 MAY 1992

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Addendum

CHAPTER V. COUNTRY AND INTERCOUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

A. Africa

Malawi

1. The Resident Representative in Malawi presented the fifth country programme for Malawi, entailing indicative planning figure (IPF) resources of $62.1 million and estimated cost-sharing of $31.8 million. These funds would be oriented towards four programmes: (a) smallholder agricultural productivity; (b) small enterprise development; (c) social development; and (d) management for development, through an average of six components for each one.

2. In his presentation, the Resident Representative emphasized the distinctive characteristics of the programme, including a major collaborative effort between the Governments and donors in its preparation, its overall focus on poverty alleviation and human development, on the use of the programme approach in six local impact areas, and finally the emphasis on national execution.

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3. Twelve delegations contributed to the discussion. All welcomed the programme and considered it to be imaginatively conceived and logically consistent. It focused on UNDP priority areas of capacity-building, particulalrly poverty alleviation, grass-roots participation, institutional-building and the use of national execution.

4. Several delegations expressed concern, while recognizing the undoubted merits of the programme as presented, that the social, economic and political environment in the country would not enable it to obtain the results or the impact it deserves. One delegation cautioned that the country programme might be overambitious, and that it was essential to take into full consideration the recommendations of the Consultative Group meeting on Malawi, held at Paris on 11-12 May 1992.

5. Another delegation mentioned that it was not the purpose of the Standing Committee to be a "rubber stamp" for a programme, of which the potential success could be jeopardized by extraneous factors. The delegation therefore endorsed a proposal to approve the programme for a year's duration, and to review the matter at the Governing Council the following year, in the light of the general situation in Malawi.

6. Some other delegations, including that of Malawi, argued that, for technical reasons, it would be difficult for both the United Nations Development Programme and the Government to put in place the necessary institutional and capacity-building arrangements, staff deployment, training and logistics for such a short period as a year, and at the same time to obtain meaningful results that would provide an adequate basis for subsequent decision-making.

7. They also argued, as a matter of principle, that it was inappropriate to introduce a political dimension, on a selective basis, into the appraisal process of a country programme which all the delegations recognized as technically sound and well justified. It could be considered the equivalent of applying a precedent of political conditionality, and would thus run counter to the principle of the maintenance of neutrality by the United Nations Development Programme.

8. However, they did recognize that good governance and democracy were prerequisites for development and must be supported. They also reassured those present that the Malawi Government had heard the message that the

delegations concerned were trying to convey. They therefore favoured approval of the country programme for the full five-year period.

9. The Resident Representative believed that, by limiting approval to one year, the ultimate sufferers would be the very target groups which the United Nations Development Programme was proposing to help, thus slowing down and even disturbing the momentum of the massive work carried out in the preparation of a unique "bottom-up" appoach to alleviating poverty.

10. The Standing Committee decided to recommend that the Governing Council approve the fifth country programme for Malawi for the full five-year period, subject to:

(a) A policy review, after one year, of the enabling social and political environment, and its effect on the implementation of the country programme;

(b) A technical review (possible on the lines of a mid-term review) of the results of the country programme as soon as such a review would be meaningful.

Uganda

11. The Officer-in-Charge of the Regional Bureau for Africa introduced the fourth country programme for Uganda, which has a net indicative planning figure (IPF) of $77.3 million and expected assistance from UNDP-administered funds of the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) ($16.7 million), the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office ($8.7 million) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) ($6.8 million).

12. Four main areas of concentration are envisaged: (a) Policy and management capacity; (b) AIDS and human survival; (c) poverty alleviation and rural development; and (d) preserving the environment and managing natural resources.

13. Several delegations commended the programme for its use of the programme approach, its choice of relevant target areas, particularly with reference to the serious socio-economic implications of HIV/AIDS, and its emphasis on capacity-building, environment and women in development. One delegation noted that priorities were well defined and focused, that the number of projects had been reduced considerably, and that they were consistent with the country's Economic Recovery Programme.

14. The need for better coordination was discussed. One delegation, representing a major donor country, expressed regret that no real attempt had

been made to coordinate with its local representative during the country programming exercise. He also cited the apparent duplication between a UNDP-assisted customs computerization project and a World Bank-assisted tax and revenue project. The Officer-in-Charge explained that the areas of concern were different, and that there was no duplication. One delegation, however, noted that local representatives had been consulted and were not experiencing any problem with aid coordination although better coordination was always necessary to avoid wasting resources. Another delegation affirmed the need to assist in establishing donor coordination mechanisms for the HIV/AIDS programme.

15. Another issue raised by some donors was their desire for a common policy on the question of incentive payments for counterparts. One delegation felt that such payments should be ended, as they were neither in the interest of donors nor of Uganda, and the necessary revenue should be generated internally.

16. The Committee recommended that the Governing Council approve the fourth country programme for Uganda.